

PALMER MOUNTAIN



Okanogan
Hillsides

PALMER MOUNTAIN

Recreation Area

*Sagebrush meadows and tiny
Washburn Lake await you
high on the slopes of Palmer
Mountain.*

Bureau of Land Management



Welcome to Palmer Mountain

Palmer Mountain has more than 6,500 acres of public land managed by the Bureau of Land Management. This area is managed for its wildlife habitat, as well as recreational opportunities. Enjoy sweeping views of the Okanogan hillsides, aspen groves and grasslands, and the peaceful waters of Washburn Lake.

Getting There

From Highway 97 at Tonasket, take the Loomis-Oroville Highway west towards Loomis. Turn left on the Washburn Lake Road after approximately 12 miles. Follow the gravel road to Washburn Lake and other public land administered by BLM.

Geology

Palmer Mountain primarily consists of metamorphic rock such as quartzite, schist, phyllite, marble, greenstone and gneiss. The earth's movements over millions of years compressed and folded these rocks, and later the Ice Age glaciers rounded and eroded the landscape. Take a close look at the exposed bedrock where you'll find some grooves gouged long ago by glaciers moving across this area.

Recreational Activities

Palmer Mountain is a great place for hiking and backpacking, horseback riding, hunting, mountain biking, and even fishing at tiny Washburn Lake. Check with the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife for fishing rules. Dispersed camping is also allowed. The fall time is especially picturesque when the many stands of aspen create a brilliant background. For those who want to "get away from it all," there are plenty of hiking options off a number of roads and trails that branch off the main Palmer Mountain road. You're sure to find a favorite spot to enjoy the quiet, scenic views of this remote upland area. *Note that motorized vehicles are only allowed on the main access road.*

Wildflowers

Palmer Mountain is alive with color during spring and early summer, when many varieties of wildflowers bloom. Pea-like flowers of lupine paint mountain slopes blue, and pink-flowered phlox clamber over sagebrush branches. Sure to catch your attention, too, are the brilliant red trumpet-shaped flowers of scarlet gilia and the cat ear-shaped petals of cats-ear mariposa lily. At the higher elevations, wildflower season extends well into June and July when alpine meadows seem carpeted with colorful blooms. In the forest, you'll see floral treasures such as larkspur, heart leaf arnica, tiger lily, and yellow violet. In moister areas, look for the showy white thimbleberry. Remember to bring your camera and take photos, not flowers, so the next visitors can enjoy the flowers, too.

Wildlife

Come and experience Palmer Mountain's diverse habitats. Walk through sagebrush and bluebunch wheatgrass, watching for chukars, western meadowlarks, and vesper and Brewer's sparrows.

Take a rest by Washburn Lake where you may spot several waterfowl—the pied-billed grebe, sora, ruddy duck and American coot. The higher elevation conifer forest provides habitat for black bear, blue grouse, pileated woodpecker, and the red-breasted nuthatch. A few carnivores—such as cougars, bobcats, and coyote—have also been seen in the area. Summer and winter are both great for wildlife viewing. As many as 150 mule deer per square mile migrate to the Palmer Mountain area.

Cultural

For thousands of years, the native people relied on this land, traveling to the rivers during the spring and summer salmon runs to catch fish, to the hillsides to dig roots, to the mountains for berries and deer meat, and back to the lowlands to spend their winters in mat-covered houses. Many of these resources continue to be used by descendants of these "First Peoples."

By the 1860s, hopeful miners and prospectors arrived in search of gold, silver, copper, lead and zinc. The region's mineral industry boomed. The flume systems of one historic mine are partially visible today near the bottom of Washburn Lake Road.

In the early 20th century, despite long distance transport of irrigation water, agriculture replaced mining as the area's major industry. One of the early homesteaders was Nathan Washburn.

*We hope you enjoy your visit to the
Palmer Mountain area.*

For more information, contact:

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Phone: 509/665-2100

**Check our website for other recreational
opportunities and periodic updates:
www.or.blm.gov/spokane**

BLM/OR/WA/GI-03/016-1122

**PALMER MOUNTAIN /
SPLIT ROCK DAY USE AREA**

